AGENDA ITEM III C-2

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Louisiana State University at Alexandria

Associate of Science in Emergency Medical Technology (Paramedic)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In April 2000, the Board of Regents received a proposal from Louisiana State University at Alexandria requesting permission to offer an Associate of Science degree in Emergency Medical Technology (Paramedic). Faculty at two in-state institutions were selected to review the proposal. Reviewers' comments and institutional responses to these comments are reflected in the summary below:

STAFF SUMMARY

1. Program Description

The proposed program is designed to prepare Emergency Medical Technicians-Paramedic, academically and clinically, to assist in meeting emergency medical services needs in central Louisiana. The program, developed in cooperation with a community advisory group, incorporates course work identified as essential to the practice of the emergency medical technician- paramedic. Objectives, content, and learner strategies provide for the development of competencies in areas including, but not limited to, medical emergencies, trauma care, pharmacology, and special emergency operations.

The competency-based Emergency Medical Technology-Paramedic courses of the program are consistent with the EMT-Paramedic National Standard Curriculum published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Administration. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will be eligible to complete the National Registry Examination for Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic.

The objectives of the proposed program are as follows:

1. Analyze the role of the Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic in the health care industry, including continuous quality improvement activities;
2. Communicate effectively, orally and in writing, with clients and all members of the health-system team;
3. Implement the duties and responsibilities of the EMT-P while adhering to standards of practice in a variety of health-system settings;
4. Apply legal and ethical standards to the practice of the Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic;
5. Demonstrate the ability to utilize critical thinking and decision making as a member of

the interdisciplinary heath care team;

6. Assume responsibility for one's own practice, for self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and for life-long professional development;
7. Consistently maintain an image, including attitudes and values, appropriate for the profession of Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic; and
8. Demonstrate ability to work cooperatively with provider agencies, networks, and community organizations to maintain quality, accessible care.

The proposed program is 75 credits and five semesters in length. At the completion of this curriculum, students will be awarded an Associate of Science degree in Emergency Medical Technology (Paramedic). The reviewers and staff had the following curricular concerns (the institutional response is provided in *italics*):

In certain areas of the state the presence of paramedic training programs at Technical Colleges has impacted enrollment in associate degree programs at proximate universities. The institutional response should address how the proposed program will articulate with the EMT program at the proximate LTC Avoyelles - Hessmer campus.

In the early planning of the Paramedic Program, LSUA entered into dialogue with both LTC Alexandria and LTC Avoyelles. Discussions focused on the articulation of the graduates of these programs into the LSUA Associate of Science program. The articulation of the Nationally Registered EMT-Paramedic will be a smooth one given the standard curriculum used throughout the state and regulated by the Bureau of EMS. Nationally registered EMT-Paramedic practitioners who pursue the Associate of Science program will be required to validate their skills through completion of a paramedic update course. The Bureau of EMS requires that NREMT-Paramedics complete a 48-hour EMT-Paramedic Update every two years. The update will be offered at LSUA for the purpose of articulating currently practicing EMT-Paramedics into the LSUA Associate of Science program. The course will also provide an opportunity for recruitment into the EMT-Paramedic Associate of Science program. A specific accelerated curriculum plan will be established for the articulation program upon approval by the Board of Regents. LSUA has a similar type of accelerated curriculum plan in place for the articulation of the LPN into the AND program. LSUA's "Accelerated LPN to AND Track" has been used as a model for associate degree programs throughout the state.

2. Need

Several factors have served to increase the demand and opportunities for Emergency Medical Technology-Paramedics prepared at the Associate Degree Level. The primary force has been the increased complexity of the role of the EMT-P resulting from advances in technology, research, and delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical care. As the leader of the emergency medical pre-hospital

team, the EMT-P is the key person in achieving high standards of patient care and in assuring the smooth, systematic functioning of emergency medical services.

An additional factor increasing the manpower need is the high rate of job stress and turnover resulting from the physical and psychological demands of the career. As confirmed by

the community advisory committee, many job openings in the field are a result of the physical, mental, and emotional stress related to emergency health care.

A 1998 needs assessment survey of twenty-two (22) agencies, employing 700 EMT-Paramedics, indicated that the need for Paramedics will continue to increase annually. It is projected that the position availability will increase by 42% over the next five years. On the same survey, respondents included the following specific trends as driving forces to the need for more EMT-Paramedics:

1) Growth in service areas;
2) Expansion of company;
3) Increase off- shore workers;
4) Expansion of rescue teams to include medical & trauma; and
5) Increased community involvement to assist local ambulance services.

The National Registry of EMT's stresses standards which require Paramedics to develop cognitive, psycho-motor, and affective skills necessary to safely and productively function in pre-hospital and hospital settings. Skills in emergency care related to anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, communication, psychology, and computer literacy were among content areas identified by the LSUA Emergency Medical Technology-Paramedic Advisory committee as essential.

Considering the competencies necessary for the paramedic, the advisory committee members unanimously supported the recommendation that LSUA provide an Associate Degree in EMT-P. Seventy-three percent (73%) or 16 of the 22 respondents to the needs survey agreed that the Associate Degree could best meet educational needs of the paramedic and the emergency health care needs in the local health care community. The remaining thirteen percent (13%) or 6 of the 22 respondents indicated the non-degree option as adequate for education of the Paramedic.

Data from the 1998 survey indicated that the salary for paramedics in the central Louisiana area is an average of $25,000 annually, with a range of $20,000-$30,000. The average yearly salary increase from entry level to five years of employment rises substantially, and advisory committee members are in agreement that as the demand and opportunities for Paramedics continue to increase, so will the level of compensation.

3. Students

It is projected that 28 students will enroll in the program during the first year and each year thereafter. The institution expects that 25 individuals will graduate from the program every year beginning with year two. The reviewers and staff had the following curricular concerns (the institutional response is provided in *italics*):

The estimated enrollment of 28 (25 graduates) appears to be optimistic given the enrollment figures at similar programs currently operating in the state.

The estimated enrollment of 28 (25 graduates) is an enrollment number based upon the results of the Needs Assessment and upon the expected numbers of currently practicing EMT-Basic level providers who have expressed an interest in pursuing the Associate of Science degree. The accelerated program for students who have completed the EMT-Paramedic curriculum at vocational-technical colleges is anticipated to increase the number of graduates as well.

4. Faculty

The reviewers and staff had the following concerns regarding faculty (the institutional response is provided in *italics*):

The extent of participation of the current faculty in the new program is unclear. Provided their participation is adequate, two new faculty positions should be sufficient.

The adjunct faculty currently teaching in the EMT-Basic course have been involved in the development of the EMT-Paramedic Associate of Science program and have expressed an interest in teaching in the program. Additionally, the adjunct faculty currently teaching in the EMT-Basic course are certified by the Bureau of EMS to teach the EMT-Paramedic curriculum.

The current faculty's preparation and background appears to be nursing. Nurses have traditionally participated in EMS education. However, it is recommended that at least one of the new faculty positions be allocated to a Nationally Registered Paramedic with at least two years of pre-hospital experience.

The current faculty's preparation and background is nursing. Nurses do participate in EMT education, however, faculty in EMS education must be certified as EMS instructors by the Bureau of EMS. Two faculty in the Division of Nursing and Health Sciences who hold master's degrees in Nursing are certified by the Bureau of EMS as EMS instructors and could serve as faculty in the EMT-Paramedic program. The adjunct faculty currently teaching in the EMT-Basic are RNs certified as EMS instructors by the Bureau of EMS. It is our intent to employ at least one Nationally Registered EMT-Paramedic with at least two years of pre-hospital experience. Additionally, it is our intent that the NREMT-P faculty member also hold a master's degree. The new faculty will be employed by August 2001 for program implementation to commence in Fall 2001.

5. Library and Other Special Resources

The current library holdings in related fields are adequate to initiate the proposed program. Existing general reference books, periodicals and other support materials in the area of general health care exceed 2,900 volumes. The library holdings will need to be expanded and improved to meet needs of the program during the first five years. While current holdings specific to the study of Emergency Medicine are numerous (280), references specific to the study of EMT-P will need to be

added. Library expenditures for the first five years are projected at $2,000 for years one and two, $1,500 for years three and four, and $1,000 for year five.

6. Facilities and Equipment

The proposed program will not require new facilities. The EMT equipment and supplies currently in use for instruction in the EMT-Basic course are housed in the Nursing Learning Resource Center. No special preparation will be required for installation of equipment.

7. Administration

The program will be administered through the Division of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Associate in Nursing program will provide valuable support for the proposed program.

8. Accreditation

PROGRAM APPROVAL: The program must obtain approval from the Louisiana Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. Completers of approved programs will complete the national Registry for Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedics. Requirements for approval include completion of an application which provides the Board with documentation, syllabi and supporting materials, validating ability of the program to achieve competencies as set forth by the Boards of Registry.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION: The program is eligible to apply for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The criteria will be achieved through efforts of the faculty, lead by the program director. Curriculum design, outcomes, and program policies will be formulated within the framework of the Standards and Guidelines. Fees for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs are $4,000 (includes site visit, application fees, and annual renewal).

9. Costs

Total projected costs for the program are $84,700 annually for years one through four.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed program falls within the role, scope, and mission of LSU-A. Through several institutional responses, the institution concurred and adequately addressed the recommendations identified by the reviewers and the Regents' staff, particularly those dealing with faculty, students, and program description. Given that all areas of concern were appropriately addressed, the staff recommends approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends approval for the proposed Associate of Science degree in Emergency Medical Technology (Paramedic) program (CIP Code 510904) at Louisiana State University at Alexandria.